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AFGHANISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Linking Afghan Carpet Makers to the World

Domotex Offers the Opportunity for Financial Success and International Recognition



Haji Nabi of Zinnat Carpet accepts the award for Best Modern Design at Domotex Hanover.

By encouraging the participation in international trade shows, USAID is helping the Afghan carpet sector reclaim its place as a leader in the handmade world carpet market.

USAID's Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development project (ASMED) sponsored the participation of 30 Afghan carpet traders in Domotex, the premiere carpet and flooring trade show held every January in Hannover, Germany. The show was organized with the assistance of the Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan.

Over 40,000 square meters of Afghan carpet were on display for the thousands of international attendees. Some of the traders sold all their carpets before the exhibition even opened to the general public. By the end of the show, all of the carpet producers were able to sell the carpets they had brought with them. In addition, many traders signed contracts for future exports. A conservative estimate puts the total value of all contracts combined at \$4.5 million. Carpet sales at the show reached \$700,000, for a total of at least \$5.2 million in deals at Domotex.

In addition to the financial success of the Hanover show, one Afghan carpet producer also received international applause for carpet design. Haji Nabi, owner of Zinnat Carpets, won the Best Modern Design Award for carpets under 100 euro per square meter in Domotex's annual Carpet Design Award competition. Over 148 carpets from 15 countries competed in 10 categories.

Praising the good news, and speaking about the importance of the carpet sector for the Afghan economy, Mr. Amin Farhang, Afghan Minister for Trade and Industries, stated that currently Afghanistan produces 2 million square meter carpet and exports 1.5 million of that to international markets each year. The sector has provided jobs to about 6 million workers, 80 percent of whom are women. Successes such as those experienced at Domotex will only help increase the amount of carpets exported and add to the job market.

To expand the linkage of all Afghan businesses, particularly the Afghan carpet industry, to international markets, USAID's ASMED project will continue to coordinate with a number of agencies to support Afghan traders' participation in such international trade shows in the future. This will tighten the gap between the Afghan suppliers and international consumers, thereby bolstering the Afghan private sector and businesses.